

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 19

HUMAN EVENTS  
19 JANUARY 1980

## Identities Must Be Secret

# Iran Crisis Shows Need for Intelligence Agents

By REP. ROBERT McCLODY (R.-Ill.)

The crisis in Iran has driven home the message that our nation must have the best possible information about what is happening—or may happen—around the world. Too often events, in Iran and elsewhere, have caught our nation by surprise.

Although the men and women serving in our intelligence agencies possess the same dedication and professionalism which have characterized them since their founding during World War II, a prevailing public atmosphere of suspicion and cynicism has hindered their efforts in recent years.

This atmosphere, described broadly as a post-Watergate reaction to a relatively few well-publicized excesses, has gone beyond a healthy reappraisal of what is valuable and what is dangerous in the field of intelligence. It has amounted to a free-wheeling attack on the ability of our nation to engage in the essential intelligence activities it must engage in if we are to protect ourselves and our allies against foreign enemies.

A good example of the extreme to which some have gone in recent years has been the overt publication of the names of U.S. intelligence personnel working secretly overseas. This has been done by individuals such as the one-time CIA agent, Philip Agee, and the editors of such publications as *Counterspy* and *Covert Action Information Bulletin*. The director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Adm. Stansfield Turner, hit the mark dead center when he described as "traitors" those who reveal the names of U.S. agents who have been serving under cover.

In October, the entire membership of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence—both Republicans



One-time CIA agent Agee (above) is an example of the extremists who expose U.S. agents who have been serving under cover.

and Democrats—joined in co-sponsoring a so-called "names of agents" bill. This measure for the first time reflects a bipartisan consensus that the release of the name of an agent—even if obtained from open sources—should be a federal crime.

This legislation is desperately needed. The brave men and women who serve our nation overseas deserve at least this measure of respect and protection from their government.

Another area in which our intelligence activities have diminished in recent years has been in covert action operations. These operations, by which we advance our national security interests by supporting forces friendly to us, are an indispensable element of our foreign policy.

But significant covert action operations have become next to impossible since the passage in 1974 of the so-called Hughes-Ryan amendment.

Under Hughes-Ryan, the President is required to report all covert operations "in a timely fashion" to eight separate committees of Congress. Such a broad disclosure requirement risks leaks of sensitive material.

For this reason, foreign governments as well as individuals are increasingly unwilling to cooperate with the United States in these much-needed operations. They express justifiable fear that the exposure of their participation may cause them political embarrassment—or even put them in grave physical danger.

The chairman and ranking minority members of the affected committees have indicated unanimous agreement that the cumbersome reporting procedures required by Hughes-Ryan must be revised. There is now a reasonable prospect that legislation will pass this Congress to reduce the reporting requirement to just one committee in each body of Congress.

These are just a few samples of the sort of changes which must be made if we are to re-establish our intelligence capability. The world is too dangerous a place for us not to have the strongest possible intelligence service.